

research  
in practice  
*for adults*

What is...  
***safeguarding  
adults?***

Dartington

# What is ...

## ***safeguarding adults?***



***Safeguarding adults is*** about people and organisations working together to stop abuse happening to adults who are unable to protect themselves.

Abuse means being treated badly. It could be physical, psychological or sexual. Other types of abuse include financial abuse – taking money from people without consent – and neglect – not having basic needs met. Organisational abuse is when a person’s needs are seen as less important than the smooth running of an organisation or home. Domestic abuse, ‘modern slavery’ - where people are made to work for no or low wages - and antisocial behaviour may also be safeguarding issues. Self-neglect (where someone is not meeting their own basic needs) can also be included in safeguarding.

Sometimes the abuser also has care and support needs, so they may need support too.

If abuse is happening, a safeguarding adults team should be told. They will talk to the people involved and try to stop the abuse. This is called ‘safeguarding adults’.

# How does ...

## *safeguarding adults work?*



**Anybody can tell social services that someone is being abused, and it is everyone's responsibility to do this. This is called 'raising a concern'.**

You can find out how to raise a concern on your council's website - just search for 'safeguarding adults'. If you are unable to use the internet, talk to someone that you trust. You do not have to give your name if you raise a concern.

When a concern is raised, as many details as possible will be taken. Someone will talk to the person as soon as they can to find out what they would like to happen.

If the person who has been abused has difficulty being involved in deciding what should happen, they might have an independent advocate, relative or their carer speak on their behalf.

If it's the right thing to do, the council will begin to coordinate a safeguarding enquiry. This aims to find out whether the council or another organisation, or person, should do something to help and protect the adult. The enquiry should take the person's safety into account, but also think about their wellbeing more broadly - so they do not end up safe but unhappy. Whatever happens, the person's wishes should be heard and acted on wherever possible. If they cannot be acted on, someone should explain why.



If a crime has been committed (such as theft or assault) then the police will be contacted. This is so the person who has been abused can have the chance to press charges, if they want to.

After the enquiry, some actions will be decided on to protect and support the person and their wellbeing. The action plan might involve the person changing what kind of service they have, or having a different kind of support - but it depends on the person and their circumstances. The person's views and wishes should be taken into account.

## How do ...

### *I know if things are working well?*

*People will listen to you if you tell them about a safeguarding concern, and explain clearly what will happen, by when, and how you will be involved.*

*If the safeguarding concern is about you, you or your advocate will be asked what you would like to happen. People will explain how they can help and what can and can't be done.*

*If it is difficult for the adult to be involved in safeguarding, and there is no-one else who can support them (like a family member or friend), the council must arrange for an advocate to support them instead. An advocate is someone who will find out what the person wants and speak on their behalf.*

*People will assume the person can make their own decisions unless they can show otherwise.*

*The person will get the support they need to stay safe, without compromising their independence, dignity, wellbeing or family life.*

*The person gets the outcomes that they want - or people explain why something different might need to happen, for example if others are at risk.*

*You can contact your council if you have questions or concerns. Councils want to know how well things are working for people.*

# Practical advice



**If you think you or someone else is being abused, tell someone or raise a safeguarding concern. Even if you are not sure, it is really important to speak up so people don't get hurt.**

**Ask questions if you don't understand what is happening or why.**

**After you raise a concern, you should hear back within a few days - if you don't, follow it up.**

**Ask the safeguarding team to write down who to contact if you have any questions, and dates of important meetings for you.**

**Ask for an advocate if you, or the person who is being abused, doesn't feel able to say what they want to happen.**

**Remember that you should be in control of making decisions if the safeguarding adults process is about you. If you don't feel you have enough information or support to make a decision, tell someone.**

# research in practice *for adults*

**Safeguarding adults** is about protecting adults who may not be able to protect themselves from abuse, and having regard for their wishes, views and feelings before deciding on any action. It is something that everyone needs to know about. This guide lets you know about how safeguarding adults works.

This guide has been produced by Research in Practice for Adults. We are a charity that uses evidence from research and people's experience to help understand adult social care and to improve how it works.

If you think you or another adult has experienced or may experience abuse, you should contact your local council. **If it is an emergency, ring 999.**

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**[www.ripfa.org.uk](http://www.ripfa.org.uk)**

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